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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Summary record of the 12th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 16 June 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

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06-39092 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Question of dissemination of information on decolonization (*continued*) (A/AC.109/2006/L.4/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.4/Rev.1

2. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to a revised draft resolution on the dissemination of information on decolonization (A/AC.109/2006/L.4/Rev.1) issued pursuant to informal consultations.

3. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) suggested that in future years, the phrase "of the Secretariat" after the words "the Department of Public Information" in the sixth preambular paragraph should be deleted as superfluous.

4. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.4/Rev.1 was adopted.*

Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands (A/AC.109/2006/3-8, 11-13, 15 and 16; A/AC.109/2006/L.9)

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Question of the United States Virgin Islands

Hearing of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories

5. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Corbin (United States Virgin Islands) took a place at the Committee table.*

6. **Mr. Corbin** (United States Virgin Islands) said that the resolutions the Special Committee had adopted on the small Territories during his Government's term of office reaffirmed the relevance of General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). They noted constitutional developments affecting the internal governance of some Territories and confirmed the legitimate political status options of integration, free association and independence. The importance of visiting missions and regional seminars that enabled Member States to assess the situation on the ground were emphasized. The resolutions acknowledged the applicability to the Territories of the programmes of action of United Nations world conferences in fields such as sustainable development, human settlements and the information society, and noted that many Territories had participated as observers at such forums. The resolutions stressed the importance of completing the programme of action of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and of raising awareness among the Territories' inhabitants of the options available to them.

7. Recent resolutions underscored the incompatibility between the exercise of unilateral authority by some administering Powers and the attainment of self-government by the Territories under their control. Significant references were made to some Territories' quests for devolution of power to elected governments. The resolutions repeated requests for substantive reports on the implementation of resolutions on decolonization, as Member States were concerned that replies from a few agencies provided insufficient information.

8. His Government commended the Special Committee on draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.9 on small Territories, as highlighting the importance of self-determination as a fundamental human right. The draft resolution also recognized the role of the United Nations in developing political education programmes, and the need to establish linkages with the wider United Nations system in order to implement some aspects of the decolonization mandate. While non-implementation of the Committee's resolutions remained a significant obstacle to the realization of decolonization, they were of the utmost importance since most of them ultimately became the legislative authority of the General Assembly on action to be taken by the United Nations and other actors. His Government therefore endorsed the Committee's Plan of Implementation of the Decolonization Mandate (A/60/853-E/2006/75), which identified which bodies should implement the measures called for by the General Assembly. The Plan should improve the integration of decolonization into the work programmes of the relevant United Nations agencies.

The Committee should take care to assess implementation of the Plan in a consistent manner.

9. His Government had appreciated the specific recommendations the Committee had made on the United States Virgin Islands and the sensitivity it had shown to the situation there. In particular, the Committee had called for the Territory to join United Nations agencies and regional organizations, welcomed the initiatives the Territory had taken to ease its financial crisis, supported its position on ownership of its natural resources, and opposed legislative and other measures that would have reduced the territorial Government's authority over its financial resources. The Committee should ascertain why its recommendations had not been better implemented by the United Nations agencies and the administering Power.

10. Turning to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations, he said that the Territories' participation in relevant United Nations programmes and activities was a key element in developing their capacity and reducing their isolation from their respective regions and the international community. His Government commended the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on their assistance to many Non-Self-Governing Territories. However, he failed to understand why the report of the President of the Economic and Social Council on consultations with the Special Committee (E/2006/47) asserted that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) did not implement such assistance programmes. In fact, UNESCO provided associate membership to more small Territories than any other United Nations agency. His Government therefore suggested that the Secretariat's request for information to UNESCO and other bodies should be redrafted and further steps taken to ascertain what activities the agencies had carried out. In future, such reports should indicate whether the specialized agencies had included assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories in their agendas, as requested by the General Assembly.

11. ECLAC had adopted resolutions in 1998 and 2004 promoting the development of mechanisms for its associate members, including some Non-Self-Governing Territories, allowing participation in some of its technical activities. However, when the texts had come before the Economic and Social Council it had been suggested that the Territories' participation in those technical activities would obstruct the administering Powers' control of foreign policy. Opposition in the Council had apparently been related to the fact that the resolution had originated in a body presided over by a chairman from a Non-Self-Governing Territory. As a result, the Council had taken no action on the ECLAC resolutions. The episode demonstrated the inconsistencies faced by the Non-Self-Governing Territories in their efforts to participate in the international process.

12. *Mr. Corbin withdrew.*

Question of Montserrat

Hearing of petitioners

13. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Cabey (Montserrat Progressive Society of New York) took a place at the petitioners' table.*

14. **Mr. Cabey** (Montserrat Progressive Society of New York) said that special attention should be given to the specific needs of Montserrat and its people and the issues that they faced. Montserrat continued to feel the effects of the eruptions of the Soufrière Hills Volcano in 1995 and 1997, which had affected the island's social and economic position in such a way that the island would be unable to recover fully, a situation that was further exacerbated by ongoing volcanic activity. In that regard, he expressed his appreciation for the help and support of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in helping Montserratians to rebuild their lives, and the direct assistance of the European Union and the United States of America in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.

15. While Montserrat also appreciated the financing and other assistance that the Government of the United Kingdom had provided, it sought to return to the path towards self-sufficiency that it had been pursuing successfully prior to the volcanic disaster, which would enable it to become independent of such financing. His organization therefore sought the assistance of the

Special Committee, United Nations Member States and non-governmental organizations in a manner that complemented the efforts of the United Kingdom authorities in meeting the needs of the Montserrat people. Montserrat needed foreign direct investment and the help of the United Nations in navigating the difficulties of the global economy. Closer liaison with the Special Committee was also needed to ensure that the Committee was better informed of Montserrat's progress.

16. The Committee should examine the question of Montserrat more closely in order to enable the island nation to move beyond its present circumstances. His organization sought the Committee's help in locating funds and expertise that would help Montserrat to develop the remaining safe areas of the island in order, inter alia, to encourage citizens who were eager to return to do so and enable them to sustain a comfortable lifestyle.

17. The development of the economy and infrastructure would encourage people to visit and settle on the island. Given that it was as important to plan for the future as to provide for the needs of the present population, his organization further requested the Committee's assistance in helping to locate the Montserrat diaspora in order to better determine the necessary long-term planning of the island nation, and was ready to work with the Committee in helping Montserrat to take the necessary steps to return to self-sufficiency.

18. *Mr. Cabey withdrew.*

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.9

19. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.9 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.11

20. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.11 was adopted.*

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/60/853-E/2006/75; A/AC.109/2006/L.10)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.10

21. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.10 was adopted.*

22. **Mr. Sitnikov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had not objected to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, but would continue to be guided by its consistent position when the matter was taken up by the Fourth Committee.

Economic and other activities which affect the interests of peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/AC.109/2006/L.12)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.12

23. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.12 was adopted.*

Question of New Caledonia (A/AC.109/2006/14; A/AC.109/2006/L.13)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.13

24. **Mr. Journès** (Observer for France) said that delegations had made considerable progress in informal consultations and were nearing consensus on the draft resolution, owing to the spirit of cooperation and transparency in which the consultations had been conducted. He noted in that regard that cooperation between France and the Pacific Island countries continued to be fruitful. He expressed the hope that additional time would be made available for further consultations.

25. **The Chairman** said that the Committee would defer action on draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.13.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.